

SUGGESTED REVISIONS – March 2024

Grade Appeal Policy (revised 2024)

[To be placed in the *TCU Student Handbook*, *TCU Handbook for Faculty & Staff*, *Graduate Catalog*, and *Undergraduate Catalog*]

Procedures for filing an Academic Appeal

The following procedures are specified for filing a formal grade appeal.

Preconditions for a Formal Grade Appeal:

In the event a student questions the appropriateness of a grade assigned for a course or the results of another critical component of a degree requirement (e.g. oral exam, juried exhibition, thesis, etc.) the student must first discuss the matter with the faculty member(s). These discussions between the faculty member and student should be initiated by the student as soon as possible after the grade is assigned, but no later than ten (10) academic days following the disclosure of the grade to the student. The faculty member is expected to respond with their decision within ten (10) academic days of the initiation. If there is no response from the faculty member, the student may present the issue directly to the department chair. In the event that the faculty member agrees to change the grade/decision, the normal process for changing a grade shall be followed. If the student wishes to appeal the faculty's decision after these discussions, they must follow the formal grade appeals process outlined below.

Notes and definitions:

- For the purposes of this policy, an “academic day” is defined to be any day on which classes meet during a regular long Fall or Spring semester or during summer academic sessions.
- Initiation of the discussion is any attempt to contact the faculty of record, or chair of examination committee in the case of a candidacy exam or thesis/dissertation defense, about the grade, including email or other written correspondence (recommended), personal meeting, and telephone call or message.
- If a student does not receive a reply acknowledging receipt of an appeal letter within five (5) academic days, they may contact the next administrator to request the next stage of appeal.
- For the purposes of this policy, “academic dean” refers either to the dean of a college or school offering the course or their designee, most typically an associated dean of that same college or school designated by the dean to handle the relevant academic matters.
- “Department chair” refers to the academic administrator responsible for the unit providing the instruction in which the grade was given. In some units this may be a program director or other academic administrator. The office of the academic dean of the college or school offering the course can provide the appropriate administrator if necessary.

- Study abroad students are subject to the rules, regulations, and academic policies of the host university/program. Study abroad grades do not fall under this policy.

Formal Grade Appeal:

1. Appeal to the Department Chair

The student may appeal the faculty decision **in writing** to the department chair or appropriate administrator within five (5) academic days of receiving a response from the faculty member.

The department chair or appropriate administrator will become familiar with the facts of the case by communicating with the student and the faculty member(s). The parties have a right to meet with the chair without the other party present. The faculty member or examination committee chair will respond **in writing** to the department chair concerning the student's appeal. At any point in the appeals process, the appealing student has the right to request and obtain copies of any materials relating to the student that have been shared with others to justify the grade or other issue under appeal.

The department chair or appropriate administrator may either accept or deny the student's appeal. The chair will notify the student and faculty member(s) of their decision in writing within ten (10) academic days of receiving the appeal. In the event that the department chair accepts the student's appeal, and no further appeals occur, they will initiate a grade change through the dean of the college.

EXCEPTIONS

If the department chair is involved in the appeal as the faculty member (or as one of the faculty members), the chair of the department advisory committee will assume the department chair's role in the appeal process. If the department does not have a department advisory committee, the chair of the school/college advisory committee will assume the department chair's role in the appeal process.

2. Appeal to the Academic Dean

The chair's position may be appealed **in writing** by the student or faculty member(s) to the appropriate dean within five (5) academic days of the department chair's decision.

The dean will become familiar with the facts of the case by reading the prior appeal documents and by communicating with the student, faculty member(s), and the department chair. The parties have the right to meet with the dean without the other party present.

The academic dean will notify the student, faculty member(s), and the department chair of their decision **in writing** within ten (10) academic days of receiving the appeal. In the event the dean upholds the student's appeal and no further appeals occur, the change of grade shall be reported by the dean to the registrar's office.

EXCEPTIONS

If the dean of the college/school is involved in the appeal as the faculty member, the student may appeal directly to the Academic Appeals Committee.

3. Appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee

The dean's decision may be appealed **in writing** by the student, the faculty member(s), or the department chair to the Academic Appeals Committee within five (5) academic days of the dean's decision. The Academic Appeals Committee will follow the appeals procedures in the Academic Appeals Committee Policy, which may be obtained in full from the chair of the committee or the Provost's office.

The appeal by the student, the faculty member(s), or the department chair will be sent to the Academic Appeals Committee chair **in writing**. The material corresponding to the appeal should include a letter to the committee discussing the reason for the appeal and all pertinent documents that support the appeal. When the appeal is received, the committee chair will ask the appropriate dean for all written documents pertaining to the appeal. Once the committee chair receives the documents, they will convene a hearing panel and distribute the documents to the hearing panel members and, typically, to the parties to the appeal. During the review of the material, the chair may request other documents pertaining to the appeal. The chair will set a date for a hearing that will include the appropriate committee members, the student, and the faculty member(s). The chair will request that the dean or a designee be present to represent the college or school. Other faculty or administrators with information directly relevant to the hearing may also be invited by the committee chair.

A hearing will take place at which time all parties will have an opportunity to discuss their case and committee members will ask questions to better understand the appeal.

The committee will confer and come to a decision on whether to support the appeal or not. All parties will be notified **in writing** of the committee's decision within five (5) academic days of its decision. In the event the committee upholds the student's appeal, the chair will advise the appropriate dean to report the change of grade to the registrar's office.